



For immediate release

**Canada's Historical Information for Sale?  
– Library and Archives Canada digitization deal needs clarification –**

Toronto, June 18, 2013 – The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC) is calling on both Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the not-for-profit digitization consortium Canadiana.ca to clarify the details of a reported digitization deal that will see parts of LAC's collection enter "premium service" holdings requiring subscription-only access.

"Considering the cutbacks, staff shuffling and collection practice changes we've all witnessed at LAC in the last while," said Dorris Heffron, Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada, "this reported deal is a worrisome development suggesting researchers and educators will have to pay again for information the Canadian taxpayer has already paid to collect."

Canada's professional authors are some of the heaviest users of (and contributors to) the Library and Archives collection. Many writers depend upon free access to these archival materials to tell vital Canadian stories and to share them with Canadians across the country-

TWUC has been watching with growing concern recent developments at LAC. "We understand the intent here is to find a way to fund digitization and, eventually, release all this material to the public for free," said John Degen, TWUC's executive director, "but private deals like this seem like poor stewardship of a nationally owned collection. Any constraint on access to public resources is worrisome."

TWUC is also concerned about any unclarified copyright implications of this arrangement. Early reports suggest digitization efforts will be aimed only at "public domain" materials in the LAC collection, but there are also many works in the holdings still protected by copyright. "If we're not careful," added Heffron, "we might find ourselves in a situation where someone is required to purchase a subscription to access her own work."

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*The Writers' Union of Canada is our country's national organization representing more than 2,000 professional authors of books. Celebrating 40 years in 2013, the Union is dedicated to fostering writing in Canada, and promoting the rights, freedoms, and economic well-being of all writers. [www.writersunion.ca](http://www.writersunion.ca)*

For additional information:

John Degen, Executive Director  
The Writers' Union of Canada  
416.703.8982 Ext. 221  
[jdegen@writersunion.ca](mailto:jdegen@writersunion.ca)  
[www.writersunion.ca](http://www.writersunion.ca)

Dorris Heffron  
Chair, The Writers' Union of Canada  
[chair@writersunion.ca](mailto:chair@writersunion.ca)